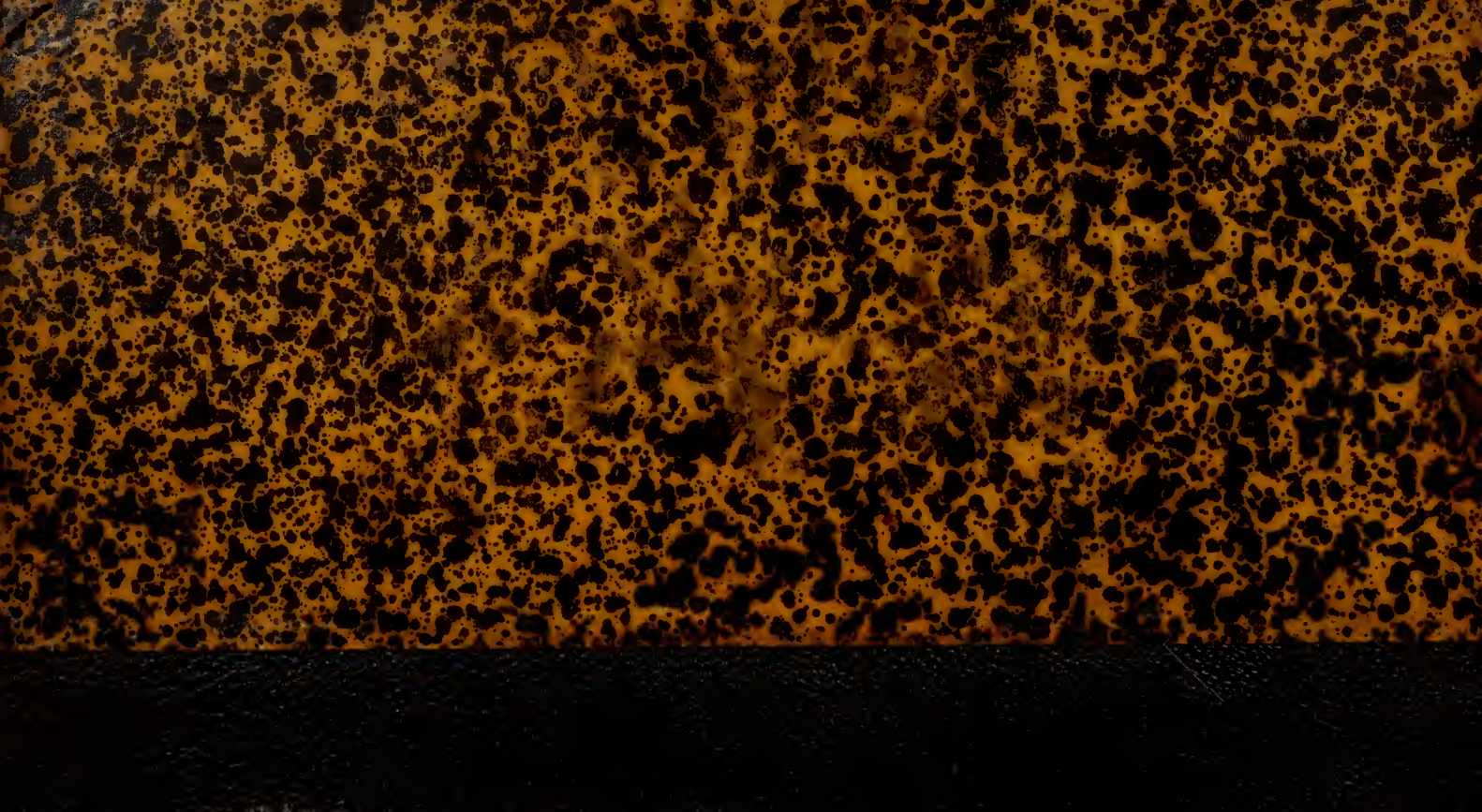

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A

TREATISE

OF

CIVIL POWER

IN

ECCLESIASTICAL CAUSES:

SHEWING THAT IT IS NOT LAWFUL FOR ANY POWER ON EARTH TO COMPEL IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

THE AUTHOR JOHN MILTON.

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TO THE

REV. RICHARD PRICE, D.D. LL.D. F.R.S.

FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETIES AT PHILADELPHIA AND BOSTON.

THIS MANUAL of John Milton is now moſt juſtly inſcribed, as the aſſertor and protector of the civil and religious rights of mankind. Who, with dangers compaſſed round, yet undiſmayed by the terrors of abſolute power, the frowns of fortune, and the malignity of the times, never relinquiſhed his principles; but, with conſiſtency and fortitude, maintained thoſe principles which at preſent enlighten the world, and give aſſurances that human nature will be improved to the utmoſt of its faculties, reſting with deity alone to fix their boundary.

THE EDITOR,

AN ENGLISHMAN,

A LOVER OF LIBERTY, HIS COUNTRY,

AND ITS ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION,

AS MOST NOBLY CONFIRMED

AT THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION.

TO THE

PARLIAMENT

OF THE

COMMONWEALTH OF ENGLAND, WITH THE DOMINIONS THEREOF.

I HAVE prepared, ſupreme council, againſt the much expected time of your ſitting, this treatiſe; which, though to all chriſtian magiſtrates equally belonging, and therefore to have been written in the common language of chriſtendom, natural dutie and affection hath confined, and dedicated firſt to my own nation: and in a ſeaſon wherein the timely reading thereof, to the eaſier accompliſhment of your great work, may ſave you much labour and interruption: of two parts uſually propoſed, civil and eccleſiaſtical, recommending civil only to your proper care, eccleſiaſtical to them only from whom it takes both that name and nature. Yet not for this cauſe only do I require or truſt to finde acceptance, but in a twofold reſpect beſides: firſt, as bringing clear evidence of ſcripture and proteſtant maxims to the parliament of England, who in all their late acts,

upon occaſion, have profeſſed to aſſert only the true proteſtant chriſtian religion, as it is contained in the holy ſcriptures: next, in regard that your power being but for a time, and having in yourſelves a chriſtian libertie of your own, which at one time or other may be oppreſſed, thereof truly ſenſible, it will concern you while you are in power, ſo to regard other mens conſciences, as you would your own ſhould be regarded in the power of others; and to conſider that any law againſt conſcience is alike in force againſt any conſcience, and ſo may one way or other juſtly redound upon yourſelves. One advantage I make no doubt of, that I ſhall write to many eminent perſons of your number, alreadie perfect and reſolved in this important article of chriſtianitie. Some of whom I remember to have heard often for ſeveral years, at a council next in authoritie to your own, ſo well joining religion with civil prudence, and yet ſo well diſtinguiſhing the different power of either, and this not only voting, but frequently reaſoning why it ſhould be ſo, that if any there preſent had been before of an opinion contrary, he might doubtleſs have departed thence a convert in that point, and have confeſſed, that then both commonwealth and religion will at length, if ever, flouriſh in chriſtendom, when either they who govern diſcern between civil and religious, or they only who ſo

diſcern

diſcern ſhall be admitted to govern. Till then nothing but troubles, perſecutions, commotions can be expected; the inward decay of true religion among ourſelves, and the utter overthrow at laſt by a common enemy. Of civil libertie I have written heretofore by the appointment, and not without the approbation of civil power: of chriſtian libertie I write now; which others long ſince having done with all freedom under heathen emperors, I ſhould do wrong to ſuſpect, that I now ſhall with leſs under chriſtian governors, and ſuch eſpecially as profeſs openly their defence of chriſtian libertie; although I write this not otherwiſe appointed or induced than by an inward perſuaſion of the chriſtian dutie which I may uſefully diſcharge herein to the common Lord and Maſter of us all, and the certain hope of his approbation, firſt and chiefeſt to be ſought: In the hand of whoſe providence I remain, praying all ſucceſs and good event on your publick councels to the defence of true religion and our civil rights.

JOHN MILTON.

A TREATISE OF

CIVIL POWER

IN

ECCLESIASTICAL CAUSES.

Two things there be which have been ever found working much miſchief to the church of God, and the advancement of truth; force on the one ſide reſtraining, and hire on the other ſide corrupting the teachers thereof. Few ages have been ſince the aſcenſion of our ſaviour, wherein the one of theſe two, or both together have not prevailed. It can be at no time therefore unſeaſonable to ſpeak of theſe things; ſince by them the church is either in continual detriment and oppreſſion, or in continual danger. The former ſhall be at this time my argument; the latter as I ſhall find God diſpoſing me, and opportunity inviting. What I argue, ſhall be drawn from the ſcripture only; and therein from true fundamental principles of the goſpel, to all knowing chriſtians undeniable. And if the governors of this commonwealth ſince

ſince the rooting out of prelates have made leaſt uſe of force in religion, and moſt have favoured chriſtian libertie of any in this iſland before them, ſince the firſt preaching of the goſpel, for which we are not to forget our thanks to God, and their due praiſe, they may, I doubt not, in this treatiſe find that which not only will confirm them to defend ſtill the chriſtian libertie which we enjoy, but will incite them alſo to enlarge it, if in ought they yet ſtraighten it. To them who perhaps hereafter, leſs experienced in religion, may come to govern or give us laws, this or other ſuch, if they pleaſe, may be a timely inſtruction: however, to the truth it will be, at all times, no unneedful teſtimonie; at leaſt ſome diſcharge of that general dutie which no chriſtian but, according to what he hath received, knows is required of him, if he have ought more conducing to the advancement of religion than what is uſually endeavoured, freely to impart it.

It will require no great labour of expoſition to unfold what is here meant by matters of religion; being as ſoon apprehended as deſigned, ſuch things as belong chiefly to the knowledge and ſervice of God: and are either above the reach and light of nature without revelation from above, and therefore liable to be variouſly underſtood by human reaſon; or ſuch things as are enjoined or forbidden by divine precept, which elſe by the light of reaſon would

would ſeem indifferent to be done or not done; and ſo likewiſe muſt needs appear to every man as the precept is underſtood. Whence I here mean by conſcience or religion, that full perſuaſion whereby we are aſſured that our belief and practice, as far as we are able to apprehend and probably make appear, is according to the will of God and his holy ſpirit within us, which we ought to follow much rather than any law of man, as not only his word every where bids us, but the very dictate of reaſon tells us. (Acts iv. 19.) "Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." That for belief or practice in religion according to this conſcientious perſuaſion no man ought to be puniſhed or moleſted by any outward force on earth whatſoever, I diſtruſt not, through God's implored aſſiſtance, to make plain by theſe following arguments.

Firſt, it cannot be denied, being the main foundation of our proteſtant religion, that we of theſe ages, have no other divine rule or authoritie from without us, warrantable to one another as a common ground but the holy ſcripture; and no other within us, but the illumination of the holy ſpirit ſo interpreting that ſcripture as warrantable only to ourſelves, and to ſuch whoſe conſciences we can ſo perſuade, can have no other ground in matters of religion but only from the ſcriptures. And theſe being not poſſible to be underſtood without this divine

divine illumination, which no man can know at all times to be in himſelf, much leſs to be at any time for certain in any other, it follows clearly, that no man or body of men in theſe times can be the infallible judges or determiners in matters of religion to any other mens conſciences but their own. And therefore thoſe Bereans are commended, (Acts xvii. 11.) who after the preaching even of St. Paul, "ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether theſe things were ſo." Nor did they more than what God himſelf in many places commands us by the ſame apoſtle, to ſearch, to try, to judge of theſe things ourſelves: and gives us reaſon alſo, (Gal. vi. 4, 5.) "let every man prove his own work, and then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf alone, and not in another: for every man ſhall bear his own burden." If then we count it ſo ignorant and irreligious in the papiſt to think himſelf diſcharged in God's account, believing only as the church believes, how much greater condemnation will it be to the proteſtant his condemner, to think himſelf juſtified, believing only as the ſtate believes?

With good cauſe therefore, it is the general conſent of all ſound proteſtant writers, that neither traditions, counſels, nor canons of any viſible church, much leſs edicts of any magiſtrate or civil ſeſſion, but the ſcripture only can be the final judge or rule in matters of religion, and that only in the conſcience of every chriſtian to himſelf.

Which

Which proteſtation made by the firſt publick reformers of our religion againſt the imperial edicts of Charles the fifth, impoſing church-traditions without ſcripture, gave firſt beginning to the name of PROTESTANT; and with that name hath ever been received this doctrine, which prefers the ſcripture before the church, and acknowledges none but the ſcripture ſole interpreter of itſelf to the conſcience. For if the church be not ſufficient to be implicitly believed, as we hold it is not, what can there elſe be named of more authoritie than the church but the conſcience; than which God only is greater? (1 John iii. 20.) But if any man ſhall pretend, that the ſcripture judges to his conſcience for other men, he makes himſelf greater not only than the church, but alſo than the ſcripture, than the conſciences of other men; a preſumption too high for any mortal; ſince every true chriſtian able to give a reaſon of his faith, hath the word of God before him, the promiſed holy ſpirit, and the mind of Chriſt within him. (1 Cor. ii. 16.) A much better and ſafer guide of conſcience, which as far as concerns himſelf he may far more certainly know, than any outward rule impoſed upon him by others whom he inwardly neither knows nor can know, at leaſt knows nothing of them more ſure than this one thing, that they cannot be his judges in religion. (1 Cor. ii. 15.) "The ſpiritual man judgeth all things, but he himſelf is judged of no man."

Chiefly

Chiefly for this cauſe do all true proteſtants account the pope antichriſt, for that he aſſumes to himſelf this infallibilitie over both the conſcience and the ſcripture; "ſitting in the temple of God," as it were oppoſite to God, "and exalting himſelf above all that is called God, or is worſhiped," (2 Theſſ. ii. 4.) That is to ſay, not only above all judges and magiſtrates, who though they be called gods, are far beneath infallible, but alſo above God himſelf, by giving law both to the ſcripture, to the conſcience, and to the ſpirit itſelf of God within us. Whereas we find, (James iv. 12.) "there is one lawgiver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy: who art thou that judgeſt another?" That Chriſt is the only lawgiver of his church and that it is here meant in religious matters, no well grounded chriſtian will deny. Thus alſo St. Paul, (Rom. xiv. 4.) "who art thou that judgeſt the ſervant of another? to his own lord he ſtandeth or falleth: but he ſhall ſtand; for God is able to make him ſtand." As therefore, of one beyond expreſſion bold and preſumptuous, both theſe apoſtles demand, "who art thou" that preſumeſt to impoſe other law or judgment in religion than the only lawgiver and judge Chriſt, who only can ſave and can deſtroy, gives to the conſcience? And the forecited place to the Theſſalonians by compared effects reſolves us, that be he or they who or wherever they be or

can

can be, they are of far leſs authoritie than the church, whom in theſe things as proteſtants they receive not, and yet no leſs antichriſt in this main point of antichriſtianiſm, no leſs a pope or popedom than he at Rome, if not much more; by ſetting up ſupreme interpreters of ſcripture either thoſe doctors whom they follow, or, which is far worſe, themſelves as a civil papacie aſſuming unaccountable ſupremacie to themſelves not in civil only but eccleſiaſtical cauſes.

Seeing then that in matters of religion, as hath been proved, none can judge or determine here on earth, no not church-governors themſelves, againſt the conſciences of other believers, my inference is, or rather not mine but our ſaviour's own, that in thoſe matters they neither can command nor uſe conſtraint; leſt they run raſhly on a pernicious conſequence, forewarned in that parable, Matt. xiii. from verſe 26. to 31: "leaſt while ye gather up the tares, ye root up alſo the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harveſt: and in the time of harveſt I will ſay to the reapers—Gather ye together firſt the tares, &c." whereby he declares that this work neither his own miniſters, nor any elſe, can diſcerningly enough or judgingly perform without his own immediate direction, in his own fit ſeaſon; and that they ought till then not to attempt it. Which is further confirmed 2 Cor. i. 24. "not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your

your joy." If apoſtles had no dominion or conſtraining power over faith or conſcience, much leſs have ordinary miniſters. (1 Pet. v. 2, 3.) "Feed the flock of God not by conſtraint, &c. neither as being lords over God's heritage."

But ſome will object, that this overthrows all church diſcipline, all cenſure of errors, if no man can determine. My anſwer is, that what they hear is plain ſcripture; which forbids not church ſentence or determining, but as it ends in violence upon the conſcience unconvinced. Let who ſo will interpret or determine, ſo it be according to true church-diſcipline; which is exerciſed on them only who have willingly joined themſelves in that covenant of union, and proceeds only to a ſeparation from the reſt, proceeds never to any corporal inforcement or forfeiture of monie; which in ſpiritual things are the two arms of antichriſt, not of the true church; the one being an inquiſition, the other no better than a temporal indulgence of ſin for monie, whether by the church exacted or by the magiſtrate; both the one and the other a temporal ſatisfaction for what Chriſt hath ſatisfied eternally; a popiſh commuting of penaltie, corporal for ſpiritual; a ſatisfaction to man, eſpecially to the magiſtrate, for what and to whom we owe none: theſe and more are the injuſtices of force and fining in religion, beſides what I moſt inſiſt on, the violation of God's expreſs commandment in the

the goſpel, as hath been ſhewn. Thus then if church governors cannot uſe force in religion, though but for this reaſon, becauſe they cannot infallibly determine to the conſcience without convincement, much leſs have civil magiſtrates authotie to uſe force, where they can much leſs judge; unleſs they mean only to be the civil executioners of them who have no civil power to give them ſuch commiſſion, no nor yet eccleſiaſtical to any force or violence in religion. To ſum up all in brief, if we muſt believe as the magiſtrate appoints, why not rather as the church? if not as either without convincement, how can force be lawful?

But ſome are ready to cry out, what ſhall then be done to blaſphemie? Them I would firſt exhort not thus to terrifie and poſe the people with a greek word: but to teach them better what it is; being a moſt uſual and common word in that language to ſignifie any ſlander, any malicious or evil ſpeaking, whether againſt God or man or any thing to good belonging: blaſphemie or evil ſpeaking againſt God maliciouſly, is far from conſcience in religion; according to that of Mark ix. 39. "there is none who doth a powerful work in my name, and can lightly ſpeak evil of me." If this ſuffice not, I refer them to that prudent and well deliberated act of Auguſt 9, 1650; where the parliament defines blaſphemie againſt God, as far as it is a crime belonging to civil judicature, "pleniùs ac

melius Chryſippo and Crantore;" in plain engliſh, more warily, more judiciouſly, more orthodoxally, than twice their number of divines have done in many a prolix volume: although in all likelihood they, whoſe whole ſtudie and profeſſion theſe things are, ſhould be moſt intelligent and authentic therein, as they are for the moſt part, yet neither they, nor theſe, unerring always or infallible.

But we ſhall not carry it thus; another greek apparition ſtands in our way, "hereſie" and "heretic;" in like manner alſo railed at to the people as in a tongue unknown. They ſhould firſt interpret to them, that hereſie, by what it ſignifies in that language, is no word of evil note; meaning only the choice or following of any opinion good or bad in religion or any other learning: and thus not only in heathen authors, but in the new Teſtament itſelf without cenſure or blame. (Acts xv. 5.) "Certain of the hereſie of the phariſees which believed," and xxvi. 5. "after the exacteſt hereſie of our religion I lived a phariſee." In which ſenſe, preſbyterian or independent may without reproach be called a hereſie. Where it is mentioned with blame, it ſeems to differ little from ſchiſm; (1 Cor. xi. 18. 19.) "I hear that there be ſchiſms among you, &c. for there muſt alſo be hereſies among you, &c.;" though ſome who write of hereſie after their own heads, would make

make it far worſe than ſchiſm; whereas on the contrarie, ſchiſm ſignifies diviſion, and in the worſt ſenſe; hereſie, choice only of one opinion before another, which may be without diſcord. In apoſtolic times, therefore, ere the ſcripture was written, hereſie was a doctrine maintained againſt the doctrine by them delivered: which, in theſe times, can be no otherwiſe defined than a doctrine maintained againſt the light, which we now only have, of the ſcripture.

Seeing therefore that no man, no ſynod, no ſeſſion of men, though called the church, can judge definitively the ſenſe of ſcripture to another man's conſcience, which is well known to be a general maxim of the proteſtant religion, it follows plainly, that he who holds in religion that belief or thoſe opinions which to his conſcience and utmoſt underſtanding appear with moſt evidence or probability in the ſcripture, though to others he ſeem erroneous, can no more be juſtly cenſured for a heretic than his cenſurers; who do but the ſame thing themſelves while they cenſure him for ſo doing. For aſk them, or any proteſtant, which hath moſt authoritie, the church or the ſcripture? they will anſwer, doubtleſs, that the ſcripture: and what hath moſt authoritie, that no doubt but they will confeſs is to be followed. He then who to his beſt apprehenſion follows the ſcripture, though againſt any point of doctrine by the whole church

received, is not the heretic; but he who follows the church againſt his conſcience and perſuaſion grounded on the ſcripture.

To make this yet more undeniable, I ſhall only borrow a plain ſimilie, the ſame which our own writers, when they would demonſtrate plaineſt that we rightly prefer the ſcripture before the church, uſe frequently againſt the papiſt in this manner. As the Samaritans believed Chriſt, firſt for the woman's word, but next and much rather for his own, ſo we the ſcripture; firſt on the church's word, but afterwards and much more for its own, as the word of God; yea the church itſelf we believe then for the ſcripture. The inference of itſelf follows: if by the proteſtant doctrine we believe the ſcripture not for the church's ſaying, but for its own, as the word of God, then ought we to believe what in our conſcience we apprehend the ſcripture to ſay, though the viſible church with all her doctors gainſay; and being taught to believe them only for the ſcripture, they who ſo do are not heretics, but the beſt proteſtants: and by their opinions, whatever they be, can hurt no proteſtant, whoſe rule is not to receive them but from the ſcripture: which to interpret convincingly to his own conſcience none is able but himſelf, guided by the holy ſpirit; and not ſo guided, none than he to himſelf can be a worſe deceiver.

To proteſtants therefore whoſe common rule and touchſtone

touchſtone is the ſcripture; nothing can with more conſcience, more equitie, nothing more proteſtantly can be permitted than a free and lawful debate at all times by writing, conference, or diſputation of what opinion ſoever, diſputable by ſcripture: concluding, that no man in religion is properly a heretic at this day, but he who maintains traditions or opinions not probable by ſcripture; who, for ought I know, is the papiſt only; he the only heretic, who counts all heretics but himſelf. Such as theſe, indeed, were capitally puniſhed by the law of Moſes, as the only true heretics, idolaters, plain and open deſerters of God and his known law: but in the goſpel ſuch are puniſhed by excommunion only; (Tit. iii. 10.) "an heretic, after the firſt and ſecond admonition, reject."

But they who think not this heavy enough, and underſtand not that dreadful awe and ſpiritual efficacie which the apoſtle hath expreſſed ſo highly to be in church-diſcipline, (2 Cor. x.) of which anon; and think weakly that the church of God cannot long ſubſiſt but in a bodily fear, for want of other proof, will needs wreſt that place of S. Paul, Rom. xiii. to ſet up civil inquiſition, and give power to the magiſtrate both of civil judgment and puniſhment in cauſes eccleſiaſtical. But let us ſee with what ſtrength of argument. "Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers." Firſt, how prove they that the apoſtle means other powers than

ſuch as they to whom he writes were then under; who meddled not at all in eccleſiaſtical cauſes, unleſs as tyrants and perſecutors; and from them, I hope, they will not derive either the right of magiſtrates to judge in ſpiritual things, or the duty of ſuch our obedience. How prove they next, that he intitles them here to ſpiritual cauſes, from whom he withheld, as much as in him lay, the judging of civil. (1 Cor. vi. 1, &c.) If he himſelf appealed to Cæſar, it was to judge his innocence, not his religion. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil;" then are they not a terror to conſcience, which is the rule or judge of good works grounded on the ſcripture. But hereſie, they ſay, is reckoned among evil works; (Gal. v. 20:) as if all evil works were to be puniſhed by the magiſtrate; whereof this place, their own citation, reckons up beſides hereſie a ſufficient number to confute them; "uncleanneſs, wantonneſs, enmitie, ſtrife, emulations, animoſities, contentions, envyings;" all which are far more manifeſt to be judged by him than hereſie, as they define it; and yet I ſuppoſe they will not ſubject theſe evil works, nor many more ſuch like, to his cogniſance and puniſhment.

"Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame." This ſhews that religious matters are not here meant; wherein from the power here ſpoken of

of they could have no praiſe. " For he is the miniſter of God to thee for good." True; but in that office, and to that end, and by thoſe means, which in this place muſt be clearly found, if from this place they intend to argue. And, how for thy good by forcing, oppreſſing, and inſnaring thy conſcience? Many are the miniſters of God, and their offices no leſs different than many; none more different than ſtate and church-government. Who ſeeks to govern both, muſt needs be worſe than any lord prelate or church-pluraliſt: for he in his own facultie and profeſſion, the other not in his own, and for the moſt part not thoroughly underſtood, makes himſelf ſupreme lord or pope of the church as far ash is civil juriſdiction ſtretches, and all the miniſters of God therein, his miniſters, or his curates rather in the function only, not in the government: while he himſelf aſſumes to rule by civil power things to be ruled only by ſpiritual: when as this very chapter, v. 6. appointing him his peculiar office, which requires utmoſt attendance, forbids him this worſe than church-plurality from that full and weighty charge, wherein alone he is " the miniſter of God, attending continually on this very thing."

To little purpoſe will they here inſtance Moſes, who did all by immediate divine direction; no, nor yet Aſa, Jehoſhaphat, or Joſiah, who both might when they pleaſed receive anſwer from God, and had a commonwealth by him de-

livered them, incorporated with a national church exercised more in bodily than in spiritual worship, so as that the church might be called a commonwealth and the whole commonwealth a church; nothing of which can be said of christianitie, delivered without the help of magistrates, yea in the midst of their opposition; how little then with any reference to them or mention of them, save only of our obedience to their civil laws, as they countenance good and deter evil: which is the proper work of the magistrate, following in the same verse, and shews distinctly wherein he is the minister of God, "a revenger to execute wrath on him that doth evil." But we must first know who it is that doth evil: the heretic they say among the first. Let it be known then certainly who is a heretic: and that he who holds opinions in religion professedly from tradition, or his own inventions, and not from scripture but rather against it, is the only heretic; and yet though such, not always punishable by the magistrate, unless he do evil against a civil law, properly so called, hath been already proved without need of repetition.

"But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid." To do by scripture and the gospel according to conscience is not to do evil; if we thereof ought not to be afraid, he ought not by his judging to give cause. Causes therefore of religion are not here meant. "For he beareth not the sword in vain."

vain." Yes altogether in vain, if it ſmite he knows not what; if that for hereſie, which not the church itſelf, much leſs he, can determine abſolutely to be ſo; if truth for error, being himſelf ſo often fallible, he bears the ſword not in vain only, but unjuſtly and to evil. "Be ſubject not only for wrath, but for conſcience ſake." How, for conſcience ſake againſt conſcience? By all theſe reaſons it appears plainly that the apoſtle in this place gives no judgment or coercive power to magiſtrates, neither to thoſe then, nor theſe now, in matters of religion; and exhorts us no otherwiſe than he exhorted thoſe Romans.

It hath now twice befallen me to aſſert, through God's aſſiſtance, this moſt wreſted and vexed place of ſcripture; heretofore, againſt Salmaſius and regal tyrannie over the ſtate; now, againſt Eraſtus and ſtate-tyrannie over the church. If, from ſuch uncertain or rather ſuch improbable grounds as theſe, they endue magiſtracie with ſpiritual judgment, they may as well inveſt him in the ſame ſpiritual kind with power of utmoſt puniſhment, excommunication; and then turn ſpiritual into corporal, as no worſe authors did than Chryſoſtom, Jerome and Auſtine, whom Eraſmus and others, in their notes on the new Teſtament, have cited to interpret that cutting off, which S. Paul wiſhed to them who had brought back the Galatians to circumciſion, no leſs than the amercement of their whole virilitie; and

and Grotius adds that this conciſing puniſhment of circumciſers became a penal law thereupon among the Viſigothes: a dangerous example of beginning in the ſpirit to end ſo in the fleſh: whereas that cutting off much likelier ſeems meant a cutting off from the church, not unuſually ſo termed in ſcripture, and a zealous imprecation, not a command. But I have mentioned this paſſage to ſhew how abſurd they often prove who have not learned to diſtinguiſh rightly between civil power and eccleſiaſtical.

How many perſecutions, then impriſonments, baniſhments, penalties and ſtripes! how much bloodſhed have the forcers of conſcience to anſwer for, and proteſtants rather than papiſts! For the papiſt, judging by his principles, puniſhes them who believe not as the church believes, though againſt the ſcripture: but the proteſtant, teaching every one to believe the ſcripture, though againſt the church, counts heretical and perſecutes, againſt his own principles, them who in any particular ſo believe as he in general teaches them; them, who moſt honor and believe divine ſcripture, but not againſt it any human interpretation, though univerſal; them, who interpret ſcripture only to themſelves, which by his own poſition none but they to themſelves can interpret; them, who uſe the ſcripture no otherwiſe by his own doctrine to their edification, than he himſelf uſes it to their puniſhing: and ſo, whom his doctrine acknowleges

knowleges a true believer, his diſcipline perſecutes as a heretic. The papiſt exacts our belief as to the church due above ſcripture; and by the church, which is the whole people of God, underſtands the pope, the general councils prelatical only, and the ſurnamed fathers: but the forcing proteſtant though he deny ſuch belief to any church whatſoever, yet takes it to himſelf and his teachers, of far leſs authoritie than to be called the church, and above ſcripture believed: which renders his practice both contrarie to his belief, and far worſe than that belief which he condemns in the papiſt. By all which well conſidered, the more he profeſſes to be a true proteſtant, the more he hath to anſwer for his perſecuting than a papiſt. No proteſtant therefore, of what ſect ſoever, following ſcripture only, which is the common ſect wherein they all agree, and the granted rule of every man's conſcience to himſelf, ought, by the common doctrine of proteſtants, to be forced or moleſted for religion.

But as for poperie and idolatrie, why they alſo may not hence plead to be tolerated, I have much leſs to ſay. Their religion the more conſidered, the leſs can be acknowledged a religion; but a Roman principalitie rather, endeavouring to keep up her old univerſal dominion under a new name and mere ſhadow of a catholic religion; being indeed more rightly named a catholic hereſie againſt the ſcripture; ſupported mainly

mainly by a civil, and, except in Rome, by a foreign power: juſtly therefore to be ſuſpected, not tolerated by the magiſtrate of another country. Beſides, of an implicit faith, which they profeſs, the conſcience alſo becomes implicit; and ſo by voluntarie ſervitude to man's law, forfeits her chriſtian libertie. Who then can plead for ſuch a conſcience, as being implicitly enthralled to man inſtead of God, almoſt becomes no conſcience, as the will, not free, becomes no will. Nevertheleſs, if they ought not to be tolerated, it is for juſt reaſon of ſtate more than of religion; which they who force, though profeſſing to be proteſtants, deſerve as little to be tolerated themſelves, being no leſs guilty of poperie in the moſt popiſh point. Laſtly, for idolatrie, who knows it not to be evidently againſt all ſcripture both of the old and new Teſtament, and therefore a true hereſie, or rather an impietie; wherein a right conſcience can have nought to do; and the works thereof ſo manifeſt, that a magiſtrate can hardly err in prohibiting and quite removing at leaſt the public and ſcandalous uſe thereof.

From the riddance of theſe objections, I proceed yet to another reaſon, why it is unlawful for the civil magiſtrate to uſe force in matters of religion; which is, becauſe to judge in thoſe things, though we ſhould grant him able, which is proved he is not, yet as a civil magiſtrate he hath no right. Chriſt hath a government of his own, ſufficient

ficient of itſelf to all his ends and purpoſes in governing his church; but much different from that of the civil magiſtrate: and the difference in this very thing principally conſiſts, that it governs not by outward force, and that for two reaſons. Firſt, becauſe it deals only with the inward man, and his actions, which are all ſpiritual, and to outward force not liable. Secondly, to ſhew us the divine excellence of his ſpiritual kingdom, able without worldly force, to ſubdue all the powers and kingdoms of this world, which are upheld by outward force only.

That the inward man is nothing elſe but the inward part of man, his underſtanding and his will, and that his actions thence proceeding; yet not ſimply thence, but from the work of divine grace upon them, are the whole matter of religion under the goſpel, will appear plainly by conſidering what that religion is; whence we ſhall perceive yet more plainly that it cannot be forced. What evangelic religion is, is told in two words, faith and charitie; or belief and practice. That both theſe flow either the one from the underſtanding, the other from the will, or both jointly from both, once indeed naturally free, but now only as they are regenerate and wrought on by divine grace, is in part evident to common ſenſe and principles unqueſtioned, the reſt by ſcripture: concerning our belief, (Matt. xvi. 17.) " fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto

unto thee, but my father which is in heaven:" concerning our practice, as it is religious and not merely civil, Gal. v. 22. 23. and other places declare it to be the fruit of the ſpirit only. Nay our whole practical duty in religion is contained in charitie, or the love of God and our neighbour, no way to be forced, yet the fulfilling of the whole law; that is to ſay, our whole practice in religion. If then both our belief and practice, which comprehend our whole religion, flow from faculties of the inward man, free and unconſtrainable of themſelves by nature, and our practice not only from faculties indued with freedom, but from love and charitie beſides, incapable of force; and all theſe things by tranſgreſſion loſt, but renewed and regenerated in us by the power and gift of God alone, how can ſuch religion as this admit of force from man, or force be any way applied to ſuch religion, eſpecially under the free offer of grace in the goſpel, but it muſt forthwith fruſtrate and make of no effect both the religion and the goſpel. And that to compel outward profeſſion, which they will ſay perhaps ought to be compelled though inward religion cannot, is to compel hypocriſie, not to advance religion, ſhall yet, though of itſelf clear enough, be ere the concluſion further manifeſt.

The other reaſon why Chriſt rejects outward force in the government of his church, is, as I ſaid before,

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to ſhew us the divine excellence of his ſpiritual kingdom, able without worldly force to ſubdue all the powers and kingdoms of this world, which are upheld by outward force only: by which to uphold religion otherwiſe than to defend the religious from outward violence, is no ſervice to Chriſt or his kingdom, but rather a diſparagement, and degrades it from a divine and ſpiritual kingdom to a kingdom of this world: which he denies it to be, becauſe it needs not force to confirm it: (John xviii. 36.) "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the jews." This proves the kingdom of Chriſt not governed by outward force; as being none of this world, whoſe kingdoms are maintained all by force only: and yet diſproves not that a chriſtian commonwealth may defend itſelf againſt outward force in the cauſe of religion as well as in any other; though Chriſt himſelf, coming purpoſely to die for us, would not be ſo defended. (1 Cor. i. 27.) "God hath choſen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." Then ſurely he hath not choſen the force of this world to ſubdue conſcience and conſcientious men, who in this world are counted weakeſt: but rather conſcience, as being weakeſt, to ſubdue and regulate force, his adverſarie, not his aid or inſtrument in governing the church. (2 Cor. x. 3. 4. 5. 6.) "For though

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we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivitie every thought to the obedience of Christ: and having in a readiness to avenge all disobedience." It is evident by the first and second verses of this chapter, that the apostle here speaks of that spiritual power by which Christ governs his church, how all sufficient it is, how powerful to reach the conscience and the inward man, with whom it chiefly deals, and whom no power else can deal with. In comparison of which, as it is here thus magnificently described, how uneffectual and weak is outward force with all her boistrous tools, to the shame of those christians, and especially those churchmen, who to the exercising of church discipline never cease calling on the civil magistrate to interpose his fleshly force; an argument that all true ministerial and spiritual power is dead within them: who think the gospel, which both began and spread over the whole world for above three hundred years under heathen and persecuting emperors, cannot stand or continue, supported by the same divine presence and protection to the world's end, much easier under the defensive favour only of a christian magistrate, unless it be enacted

enacted and ſettled, as they call it, by the ſtate, a ſtatute or a ſtate-religion: and underſtand not that the church itſelf cannot, much leſs the ſtate, ſettle or impoſe one tittle of religion upon our obedience implicit, but can only recommend or propound it to our free and conſcientious examination: unleſs they mean to ſet the ſtate higher than the church in religion, and with a groſs contradiction give to the ſtate in their ſettling petition that command of our implicit belief, which they deny in their ſettled confeſſion both to the ſtate and to the church. Let them ceaſe then to importune and interrupt the magiſtrate from attending to his own charge in civil and moral things, the ſettling of things juſt, things honeſt, the defence of things religious ſettled by the churches within themſelves; and the repreſſing of their contraries determinable by the common light of nature; which is not to conſtrain or to repreſs religion, probable by ſcripture, but the violators and perſecutors thereof: of all which things he hath enough and more than enough to do, left yet undone; for which the land groans and juſtice goes to wrack the while: let him alſo forbear force where he hath no right to judge; for the conſcience is not his province: leaſt a worſe woe arrive him, for worſe offending, than was denounced by our ſaviour, (Matt. xxiii. 23.) againſt the phariſees: ye have forced the conſcience,

which was not to be forced; but judgment and mercy ye have not executed: this ye ſhould have done, and the other let alone. And ſince it is the counſel and ſet purpoſe of God in the goſpel by ſpiritual means which are counted weak, to overcome all power which reſiſts him; let them not go about to do that by worldly ſtrength, which he hath decreed to do by thoſe means which the world counts weakneſs, leſt they be again obnoxious to that ſaying, which in another place is alſo written of the phariſees, (Luke vii. 30.) "that they fruſtrated the counſel of God." The main plea is, and urged with much vehemence to their imitation, that the kings of Judah, as I touched before, and eſpecially Joſiah, both judged and uſed force in religion; (2 Chr. xxxiv. 33.) "he made all that were preſent in Iſrael to ſerve the Lord their God." An argument, if it be well weighed, worſe than that uſed by the falſe prophet Shemaiah to the high prieſt, that in imitation of Jehoiada he ought to put Jeremiah in the ſtocks, (Jer. xxix. 24, 26, &c.) for which he received his due denouncement from God.

But to this beſides I return a three-fold anſwer: firſt, that the ſtate of religion under the goſpel is far differing from what it was under the law: then was the ſtate of rigour, childhood, bondage and works, to all which force was not unbefitting; now is the ſtate of grace, manhood, freedom

dom and faith; to all which belongs willingneſs and reaſon, not force: the law was then written on tables of ſtone, and to be performed according to the letter, willingly or unwillingly; the goſpel, our new covenant, upon the heart of every believer, to be interpreted only by the ſenſe of charitie and inward perſuaſion: the law had no diſtinct government or governors of church and commonwealth, but the prieſts and levites judged in all cauſes not eccleſiaſtical only but civil, (Deut. xvii. 8, &c.) which under the goſpel is forbidden to all church miniſters, as a thing which Chriſt their maſter in his miniſterie diſclaimed, (Lu. xii. 14.) as a thing beneath them; (1 Cor. vi. 4.) and by many of our ſtatutes, as to them who have a peculiar and far differing government of their own. If not, why different the governors? why not church miniſters in ſtate affairs, as well as ſtate miniſters in church affairs? If church and ſtate ſhall be made one fleſh again as under the law, let it be withal conſidered, that God who then joined them hath now ſevered them; that which he ſo ordaining, was then a lawful conjunction; to ſuch on either ſide as join again what he hath ſevered, would be nothing now but their own preſumptuous fornication.

Secondly, the kings of Judah, and thoſe magiſtrates under the law, might have recourſe, as I ſaid before, to divine inſpiration; which our ma-

giſtrates under the goſpel have not, more than to the ſame ſpirit, which thoſe whom they force have oft times in greater meaſure than themſelves: and ſo, inſtead of forcing the chriſtian, they force the holy ghoſt; and, againſt that wiſe forewarning of Gamaliel, fight againſt God.

Thirdly, thoſe kings and magiſtrates uſed force in ſuch things only as were undoubtedly known and forbidden in the law of Moſes, idolatrie and direct apoſtacie from that national and ſtrict enjoined worſhip of God; whereof the corporal puniſhment was by himſelf expreſsly ſet down: but magiſtrates under the goſpel, our free, elective and rational worſhip, are moſt commonly buſieſt to force thoſe things which in the goſpel are either left free, nay ſometimes aboliſhed, when by them compelled, or elſe controverted equally by writers on both ſides, and ſometimes with odds on that ſide which is againſt them. By which means they either puniſh that which they ought to favour and protect, or that with corporal puniſhment and of their own inventing, which not they but the church hath received command to chaſtiſe with a ſpiritual rod only. Yet ſome are ſo eager in their zeal of forcing, that they refuſe not to deſcend at length to the utmoſt ſhift of that parabolical proof, Luke xiv. 16, &c. "compel them to come in:" therefore, magiſtrates may compel in religion.

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As if a parable were to be ſtrained through every word or phraſe, and not expounded by the general ſcope thereof: which is no other here, than the earneſt expreſſion of God's diſpleaſure on thoſe recuſant jews, and his purpoſe to prefer the gentiles on any terms before them; expreſſed here by the word "compel."

But how compels he? doubtleſs no otherwiſe than he draws, without which no man can come to him, (John vi. 44.) and that is by the inward perſuaſive motions of his ſpirit, and by his miniſters; not by the outward compulſions of a magiſtrate or his officers.

The true people of Chriſt, as is foretold, (Pſalm cx. 3.) "are a willing people in the day of his power." Then much more now when he rules all things by outward weakneſs, that both his inward power and their ſinceritie may the more appear. "God loveth a chearful giver:" then certainly is not pleaſed with an unchearful worſhipper; as the very words declare of his evangelical invitations. (Iſa. lv. 1.) "Ho, every one that thirſteth, come." (John vii. 37.) "If any man thirſt." (Rev. iii. 18.) "I counſel thee." and (xxii. 17.) "whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And in that grand commiſſion of preaching to invite all nations (Mark, xvi. 16.) as the reward of them who come, ſo the penaltie of them who come not is only ſpiritual.

But they bring now ſome reaſon with their force, which muſt not paſs unanſwered; that the church of Thyatira was blamed, (Rev. ii. 20.) for ſuffering the falſe "propheteſs to teach and to ſeduce." I anſwer, that ſeducement is to be hindered by fit and proper means ordained in church diſcipline; by inſtant and powerful demonſtration to the contrary; by oppoſing truth to error, no unequal match; truth the ſtrong, to error the weak, though ſly and ſhifting. Force is no honeſt confutation; but uneffectual, and, for the moſt part, unſucceſsful, ofttimes fatal to them who uſe it: ſound doctrine diligently and duly taught, is of herſelf both ſufficient, and of herſelf (if ſome ſecret judgment of God hinder not) always prevalent againſt ſeducers. This the Thyatirans had neglected, ſuffering, againſt church diſcipline, that woman to teach and ſeduce among them: civil force they had not then in their power; being the chriſtian part only of that city, and then eſpecially under one of thoſe ten great perſecutions, whereof this, the ſecond, was raiſed by Domitian: force, therefore, in theſe matters could not be required of them, who were then under force themſelves.

I have ſhewn that the civil power hath neither right nor can do right by forcing religious things: I will now ſhew the wrong it doth; by violating the fundamental privilege of the goſpel, the new birthright

birthright of every true believer, chriſtian libertie. (2 Cor. iii. 17.) "Where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there is libertie." (Gal. iv. 26.) "Jeruſalem which is above, is free; which is the mother of us all;" and (31.) "we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free. It will be ſufficient in this place to ſay n[illegible]e of chriſtian libertie, than that it ſets us fr[illegible]nly from the bondage of thoſe ceremonies, but [illegible]o from the forcible impoſition of thoſe circumſtances, place and time, in the worſhip of God; which, though by him commanded in the old law, yet in reſpect of that veritie and freedom which is evangelical, St. Paul comprehends both kinds alike, that is to ſay, both ceremonie and circumſtance, under one and the ſame contemptuous name of "weak and beggarly rudiments," (Gal. iv. 3, 9, 10. Col. ii. 8. with 16.) conformable to what our ſaviour himſelf taught, (John iv. 21.) "neither in this mountain nor yet at Jeruſalem. In ſpirit and in truth: for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him." That is to ſay, not only ſincere of heart, for ſuch he ſought ever, but alſo, as the words here chiefly import, not compelled to place, and by the ſame reaſon, not to any ſet time, as his apoſtle by the ſame ſpirit hath taught us, (Rom. xiv. 6, &c.) "one man eſteemeth one day above another, another, &c." (Gal. iv. 10.) "Ye obſerve days and months, &c." (Col. ii. 16.)

Theſe, and other ſuch places of ſcripture, the beſt and learnedeſt reformed writers have thought evident enough to inſtruct us in our freedom, not only from ceremonies, but from thoſe circumſtances alſo, though impoſed with a confident perſuaſion of moralitie in them, which they hold impoſſible to be in place or time. [illegible]ful a[illegible]-what warrant then our opinions and practic[illegible]uth to e[illegible] If late turned quite againſt all other proteſtan[illegible] to and that which is to them orthodoxal, to us become ſcandalous and puniſhable by ſtatute, I wiſh were once again better conſidered; if we mean not to proclaim a ſchiſm, in this point, from the beſt and moſt reformed churches abroad.

They who would ſeem more knowing, confeſs that theſe things are indifferent, but for that very cauſe by the magiſtrate may be commanded. As if God of his ſpecial grace in the goſpel had to this end freed us from his own commandments in theſe things, that our freedom ſhould ſubject us to a more grievous yoke, the commandments of men. As well may the magiſtrate call that common or unclean which God hath cleanſed, forbidden to St. Peter; (Acts x. 15.) as well may he looſen that which God hath ſtraitened, or ſtraiten that which God hath looſened, as he may enjoin thoſe things in religion which God hath left free, and lay on that yoke which God hath taken off. For

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he hath not only given us this gift as a ſpecial privilege and excellence of the free goſpel above the ſervile law, but ſtrictly alſo hath commanded us to keep it and enjoy it. (Gal. v. 13.) " You are called to libertie." (1 Cor. vii. 23.) " Be not made the ſervants of men." (Gal. v. 14.) " Stand faſt [illegible]ore, in the libertie wherewith Chriſt has [illegible]free; and be not entangled again with the [illegible] of bondage." Neither is this a mere command, but for the moſt part, in theſe foreſighted places, accompanied with the very weightieſt and inmoſt reaſons of the chriſtian religion. (Rom. xiv. 9. 10.) " For to this end, Chriſt both died, and roſe and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why doſt thou judge thy brother, &c?" how preſumeſt thou to be his lord, to be whoſe only lord, at leaſt in theſe things, Chriſt both died, and roſe and lived again? " We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt." Why then doſt thou not only judge, but perſecute in theſe things for which we are to be accountable to the tribunal of Chriſt only, our Lord and lawgiver? (1 Cor. vii. 23.) " Ye are bought with a price; be not made the ſervants of men." Some trivial price belike, and for ſome frivolous pretences paid in their opinion, if bought and by him redeemed who is God, from what was once the ſervice of God, we ſhall be enthralled again

again, and forced by men to what now is but the ſervice of men. (Gal. iv. 31, with v. 1.) "We are not children of the bondwoman, &c. ſtand faſt therefore, &c." (Col. ii. 8.) "Beware leſt any man ſpoil you, &c. after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt." Solid reaſons whereof are continued through [illegible] whole chapter. Verſe 10, "Ye are complete [illegible] which is the head of all principalitie and [illegible]." Not compleated therefore, or made the more religious, by thoſe ordinances of civil power, from which Chriſt their head hath diſcharged us; "blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was againſt us, which was contrary to us; and took it out of the way, nailing it to his croſs; ver. 14. blotting out ordinances written by God himſelf, much more thoſe ſo boldly written over again by men: ordinancies which were againſt us, that is, againſt our frailtie, much more thoſe that are againſt our conſcience. "Let no man therefore judge you in reſpect of, &c. ver. 16. (Gal. iv. 3, &c.) "Even ſo we, when we were children, were in bondage under the rudiments of the world: but when the fulneſs of time were come, God ſent forth his ſon, &c. to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons, &c. Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon, &c. But now, &c. how turn ye again to the

the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, &c."

Hence it plainly appears, that if we be not free we are not sons, but still servants unadopted; and if we turn again to those weak and beggarly rudiments, not free; yea, though willingly, and with a d conscience, we desire to be in bondage ; how much more then if unwillingly and ast our conscience? Ill was our condition changed from legal to evangelical, and small advantage gotten by the gospel, if for the spirit of adoption to freedom, promised us, we receive again the spirit of bondage to fear; if our fear which was then servile towards God only, must be now servile in religion towards men: strange also and prepposterous fear, if when and wherein it hath attained by the redemption of our saviour to be filial only towards God, it must be now servile towards the magistrate. Who, by subjecting us to his punishment in these things, brings back into religion that law of terror and satisfaction, belonging now only to civil crimes; and thereby in effect abolishes the gospel, by establishing again the law to a far worse yoke of servitude upon us than before.

It will, therefore, not misbecome the meanest christian to put in mind christian magistrates, and so much the more freely, by how much the more they

they desire to be thought christian, (for they will be thereby, as they ought to be in these things, the more our brethren and the less our lords,) that they meddle not rashly with christian libertie, the birthright and outward testimonie of our adoption: lest, while they little think and may think they do God service, they themselves unawares be found [illegible] the sons of that bondwoman, be found [illegible] them who are freeborn of the spirit; and [illegible] sacrilege of not the least aggravation, bereaving them of that sacred libertie which our saviour with his own blood purchased for them.

A fourth reason why the magistrate ought not to use force in religion, I bring from the consideration of all those ends which he can likely pretend to the interposing of his force therein: and those hardly can be other than, first the glory of God; next, either the spiritual good of them whom he forces, or the temporal punishment of their scandal to others. As for the promoting of God's glory, none, I think, will say that his glory ought to be promoted in religious things by unwarrantable means, much less by means contrarie to what he hath commanded. That outward force is such, and that God's glory in the whole administration of the gospel according to his own will and counsel ought to be fulfilled by weakness, at least so refuted, not by force; or if by force, inward and spiritual,

ſpiritual, not outward and corporeal, is already proved at large.

That outward force cannot tend to the good of him who is forced in religion, is unqueſtionable. For in religion whatever we do, under the goſpel, we ought to be of perſuaded without ſcruple; and are juſ e faith we have, not by the work we c xiv. 5.) "Let every man be fully perſuac own mind." The other reaſon which follows , neſſarily, is obvious, (Gal. ii. 16.) and in many other places of St. Paul, as the ground-work and foundation of the whole goſpel, that we are "juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law." If not by the works of God's law, how then by the injunctions of man's law? Surely force cannot work perſuaſion, which is faith; cannot therefore juſtify, nor pacify, the conſcience; and that which juſtifies not in the goſpel, condemns; is not only not good, but ſinful to do. (Rom. xiv. 23.) "Whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin." It concerns the magiſtrate then to take heed, how he forces in religion conſcientious men: leſt, by compelling them to do that whereof they cannot be perſuaded, that wherein they cannot find themſelves juſtified, but by their own conſciences condemned, inſtead of aiming at their ſpiritual good, he force them to do evil; and while he thinks himſelf Aſa, Joſiah, Nehemiah, he be found Jeroboam, who cauſed Iſrael to ſin; and thereby

thereby draw upon his own head all thoſe ſins and ſhipwrecks of implicit faith and conformitie, which he hath forced, and all the wounds given to thoſe little ones, whom to offend he will find worſe one day than that violent drowning mentioned Matt. xviii. 6.

Laſtly, as a preface to [illegible] the uſual pretence, that although te[illegible]ruth to [illegible]nces ſhall be tolerated, yet ſcandals th[illegible]en ſhall not be unpuniſhed, prophane and [illegible]ccentious men ſhall not be encouraged to neglect the performance of religious and holy duties, by colour of any law giving libertie to tender conſciences. By which contrivance, the way lies ready open to them hereafter who may be ſo minded, to take away by little and little, that libertie which Chriſt and his goſpel, not any magiſtrate, hath right to give: though this kind of his giving be but to give with one hand and take away with the other, which is a deluding not a giving.

As for ſcandals, if any man be offended at the conſcientious libertie of another, it is a taken ſcandal, not a given. To heal one conſcience, we muſt not wound another: and men muſt be exhorted to beware of ſcandals in chriſtian libertie, not forced by the magiſtrate; leſt while he goes about to take away the ſcandal, which is uncertain whether given or taken, he take away our libertie, which is the certain and the ſacred gift of God, neither to be touched by him, nor to be parted with

by

by us. None more cautious of giving ſcandal than St. Paul. Yet, while he made himſelf "ſervant to all, that he might gain the more," he made himſelf ſo of his own accord, was not made ſo by outward [illegible] teſtifying at the ſame time that he "was fr[illegible]hen:" (1 Cor. ix. 19.) and thereafter [illegible], (Gal. v. 13.) "Ye were called to l[illegible]but by love ſerve one another:" then [illegible]ce.

As for that [illegible]leſt prophane and licentious men ſhould be encouraged to omit the performance of religious and holy duties, how can that care belong to the civil magiſtrate, eſpecially to his force? For, if prophane and licentious perſons muſt not neglect the performance of religious and holy duties, it implies, that ſuch duties they can perform; which no proteſtant will affirm. They who mean the outward performance, may ſo explain it, and then it will appear more plainly, that ſuch performance of religious duties, eſpecially by prophane and licentious perſons, is a diſhonouring, rather than a worſhiping of God; and not only by him not required, but deteſted: (Pro. xxi. 27.) "The ſacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" To compel, therefore, the prophane to things holy in his prophaneneſs, is all one under the goſpel, as to have compelled the unclean to ſacrifice in his uncleanneſs under the law.

And

And I add withal, that to compel the licentious in his licentiouſneſs, and the conſcientious againſt his conſcience, comes all to one; tends not to the honour of God, but to the multiplying and the aggravating of ſin to them both. We read not that Chriſt ever exerciſed fo[illegible] and that was to drive prophane o[illegible] temple, not to force them in: [illegible]eruth to [illegible] being there was an offence, we find, [illegible] ſcriptures, that their praying there wa[illegible]mination: and yet to the jewiſh law that nation, as a ſervant, was obliged; but to the goſpel, each perſon is left voluntary, called only, as a ſon, by the preaching of the word; not to be driven in by edicts and force of arms. For, if by the apoſtle, (Rom. xii. 1) "we are beſeeched, as brethren, by the mercies of God, to preſent our bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reaſonable ſervice" or worſhip, then is no man to be forced by the compulſive laws of men, to preſent his body a dead ſacrifice, and ſo, under the goſpel, moſt unholy and unacceptable, becauſe it is his unreaſonable ſervice, that is to ſay, not only unwilling, but unconſcionable. But if prophane and licentious perſons may not omit the performance of holy duties, why may they not partake of holy things? why are they prohibited the lord's ſupper; ſince both the one and the other action may be outward; and outward

outward performance of duty may attain at leaſt an outward participation of benefit? The church denying them that communion of grace and thankſgiving, as it juſtly doth, why doth the magiſtrate compel [illegible] to the union of performing that which they n[illegible]h, being themſelves unholy, and to [illegible] is both hateful to God, and perhaps [illegible]ous to perform holy duties irreligiou[illegible]eive holy ſigns or ſacraments unworthily. [illegible]ophane and licentious men, ſo known, can be conſidered but either ſo without the church as never yet within it, or departed thence of their own accord, or excommunicate: if never yet within the church, whom the apoſtle, and ſo conſequently the church, have nought to do to judge them, (as he profeſſes 1 Cor. v. 12.) by what authoritie doth the magiſtrate judge, or, which is worſe, compel, in relation to the church? If departed of his own accord, like that loſt ſheep Luke xv. 4, &c. the true church either with her own, or any borrowed force, worries him not in again, but rather in all charitable manner ſends after him; and if ſhe find him, lays him gently on her ſhoulders; bears him, yea bears his burdens, his errors, his infirmities any way tolerable, "ſo fulfilling the law of Chriſt:" (Gal. vi. 2.) if excommunicate, whom the church hath bid go out, in whoſe name doth the magiſtrate compel to

go in? The church indeed hinders none from hearing in her public congregation, for the doors are open to all: nor excommunicates to deſtruction, but, as much as in her lies, to a final ſaving. Her meaning therefore muſt needs be, as her driving out brings on no ou[illegible] alſo no outward force or penaltie of [illegible] only a deſtructive power, ſhould [illegible] her infectious ſheep; therefore [illegible] infectious, and not driven in, but [illegible] danger not only of the whole and ſound, but alſo of his own utter periſhing.

Since force neither inſtructs in religion, nor begets repentance or amendment of life, but, on the contrarie, hardneſs of heart, formalitie, hypocriſie, and, as I ſaid before, every way increaſe of ſin; more and more alienates the mind from a violent religion expelling out and compelling in, and reduces it to a condition like that which the Britons complain of in our ſtory, driven to and fro between the Picts and the ſea. If, after excommunion he be found intractable, incurable, and will not hear the church, he becomes as one never yet within her pale, "a heathen or a publican," (Matt xviii. 17.) not further to be judged, no not by the magiſtrate, unleſs for civil cauſes; but left to the final ſentence of that judge, whoſe coming ſhall be in flames of fire; that *Maran-athà*, (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) than which

which to him ſo left, nothing can be more dreadful, and ofttimes to him particularly nothing more ſpee[illegible] that is to ſay, the Lord cometh: In the mean- v[illegible]ed up to ſatan, (1 Cor. v. 5. 1 Tim. i. 2[illegible] fold of Chriſt and kingdom of gr[illegible] in, which is the kingdom of ſata[illegible] eceived " from darkneſs to light, [illegible]ver of ſatan to God," (Acts xxvi. 1[illegible] ivered up again from light to darkne[illegible]n God to the power of ſatan; yet ſo, as is in both places manifeſted, to the intent of ſaving him, brought ſooner to contrition by ſpiritual, than by any corporal ſeverity.

But grant it belonging any way to the magiſtrate, that prophane and licentious perſons omit not the performance of holy duties, which in them were odious to God even under the law, much more now under the goſpel, yet ought his care both as a magiſtrate and a chriſtian, to be much more that conſcience be not inwardly violated, than that licence in theſe things be made outwardly conformable: ſince his part is undoubtedly as a chriſtian, which puts him upon this office much more than as a magiſtrate, in all reſpects to have more care of the conſcientious than of the prophane; and not for their ſakes to take away, (while they pretend to give,) or to diminiſh the rightful libertie of religious conſciences.

On theſe four ſcriptural reaſons, as on a firm ſquare, this truth, the right of chriſtian and evangelic libertie, will ſtand immovable againſt deſt[illegible]ſe pretended conſequences of licenſe a[illegible] final ſaving, which, for the moſt part, m[illegible] need[illegible] b[illegible] [illegible]t as hid confuſed themſelves, or ſ[illegible] [illegible] a ſo[illegible]ty would be wiſer than divi[illegible] [illegible] d [illegible]er apteſt to object againſt th[illegible]ruth to [illegible] as if God without them, when he[illegible]g, to [illegible] [illegible]ertie, knew not of the worſt which [illegible] in their arrogance pretend will follow: yet, knowing all their worſt, he gave us this libertie, as by him judged beſt.

As to thoſe magiſtrates who think it their work to ſettle religion, and thoſe miniſters or others, who ſo oft call upon them to do ſo, I truſt, that having well conſidered what hath been here argued, neither they will continue in that intention, nor theſe in that expectation from them: when they ſhall find that the ſettlement of religion belongs only to each particular church by perſuaſive and ſpiritual means within itſelf, and that the defence only of the church belongs to the magiſtrate. Had he once learnt, not further to concern himſelf with church affairs, half his labour might be ſpared, and the commonwealth better tended. To which end, that which I premiſed in the beginning, and in due place treated of more at large, I deſire now concluding,

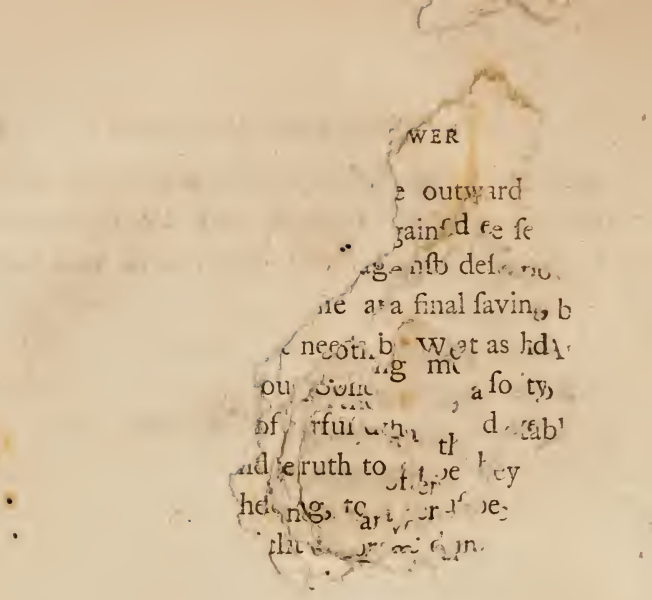
concluding, that they would conſider ſeriouſly what rel[illegible]n is: and they will find it to be in ſum, [illegible]b[illegible]ef and our practice depending upo[illegible]t there can be no place then left [illegible]is force, in the ſettlement of re[illegible]ither what we ſhall believe [illegible].ctice in religious, (neither of v[illegible] the power of man either tc[illegible]r to enable others,) I perſuade n[illegible],[illegible]n ingenuitie of all religious men, the more they examine ſeriouſly, the more they will find clearly to be true: and find, how falſe and deceivable that common ſaying is, which is ſo much relied upon, that the chriſtian magiſtrate is "cuſtos utriuſque tabulæ," keeper of both tables; unleſs is meant by keeper, the defender only: neither can that maxim be maintained, by any proof or argument, which hath not in this diſcourſe, firſt or laſt, been refuted. For the two tables, or ten commandments, teach our duty to God and our neighbour, from the love of both; give magiſtrates no authority to force either: they ſeek that from the judicial law; though on falſe grounds, eſpecially in the firſt table, as I have ſhewn; and both in firſt and ſecond execute that authoritie, for the moſt part, not according to God's judicial laws, but their own.

As for civil crimes, and of the outward man, which all are not, no not of thoſe againſt the ſecond table, as that of coveting; in [illegible] deſpower they have, they had from the [illegible] a final ſaving, before Moſes or the two tables [illegible] as hd And whether they be not now [illegible] a ſo ty be kept by any chriſtian, [illegible] tables, remains yet as under [illegible] truth to [illegible] ey never were yet delivered to [illegible] chriſtian magiſtrate. But, of th[illegible] maps more ſome other time; what may ſerve the preſent hath been above diſcourſed ſufficiently out of the ſcriptures; and to thoſe produced, might be added teſtimonies, examples, experiences of all ſucceeding ages to theſe times, aſſerting this doctrine: but having herein the ſcripture ſo copious and ſo plain, we have all that can be properly called true ſtrength and nerve; the reſt would be but pomp and incumbrance.

Pomp and oſtentation of reading is admired among the vulgar: but doubtleſs, in matters of religion, he is learnedeſt who is plaineſt. The brevity I uſe, not exceeding a ſmall MANUAL, will not, therefore, I ſuppoſe, be thought the leſs conſiderable, unleſs with them, perhaps, who think, that great books only can determine great matters. I rather choſe the common rule, not to make much ado, where leſs may ſerve; which, in controverſies

trover hose especially of religion, would
make tedious, and by consequence
read many more, and with more
be

N D.



President Adams

with the author's

most respectful compliments